Date and Time: Monday, January 22, 2024 11:03:00PM PST

Job Number: 215170290

Document (1)

1. *No magical energy transformation*

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "ecocult"

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type	Narrowed by
News	Sources: Ottawa Sun

No magical energy transformation

Ottawa Sun

May 10, 2020 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: COMMENT; Pg. A17

Length: 660 words

Byline: Lorne gunter, Ottawa Sun

Body

There are two things we can say about "renewable" energy: It seldom produces more energy than it takes to capture and release its energy - meaning many renewable projects have energy deficits.

And renewables almost always cost more tax dollars than they bring in; meaning budget deficits.

Ontario's 10-year "green" energy experiment under the former Liberal provincial government proved that. At least $50 billion in added debt, doubled electricity bills and tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs lost to the States where energy inputs weren't so pricey.

And according the Ontario auditor general, no net new energy produced and few if any emissions saved. Put simply, lots of economic losses, few environmental benefits.

Yet somehow the True Believers of the ***Ecocult*** - the Greta-nistas - have convinced themselves Canada stands on the verge of a magical energy transformation. We can pivot out of this pandemic into a world without fossil fuels.

(We've all heard people are having more colourful dreams during the pandemic. Perhaps that's behind this fanciful unicorns-and-rainbows thinking.)

Maybe it's as George Orwell wrote in his essay Notes on Nationalism, to believe the truly absurd, "one has to belong to the intelligentsia ... no ordinary man could be such a fool."

Oil price war

All through the pandemic and the ongoing Saudi-Russia oil-price war, eco radicals have been insisting this would be a great time to transition Canada away from oil and towards sustainable energy sources. (As if it were as simple as flipping a switch.)

Quite apart from the impossibility of doing so (the engineering and technology simply do not exist), how would we get through the pandemic without the petrochemicals and plastics that go into ventilators, shields, masks, gloves and medicines? How has the supply chain that has kept our grocery shelves stocked kept itself going? Solar-powered tractor-trailers? Ox carts? Would you want the power in the hospital or seniors'home in which your loved one is being treated for COVID-19 to be subject to the vagaries of the wind. Oops, sorry, the wind died and so did grandma.

Of course this week, such realities did not stop Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet from declaring "oil is dead," and warning the federal government "oil is never coming back," so "putting any more money in that business is a very bad idea."

Blanchet did not mention that Quebec consumes around 180,000 barrels a day of western Canadian oil - plus hundreds of thousands more from the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. If oil died tomorrow, so would the Quebec economy.

Blanchet's intellectual flatulence was duplicated by outgoing Green party Leader Elizabeth May, who gleefully added the pandemic gave Canada a magnificent opportunity to "transition away from oil." To what? Consider that Europe has enough wind turbines installed to meet about one-quarter of the continent's energy needs. Yet because the wind doesn't always blow and even the best turbines are inefficient in converting breezes to kilowatts, wind never supplies more than about 4% - on a gusty day.

Then there's the fact that the average turbine tower consumes 900 tons of steel, 2,500 tons of concrete for the base and 45 tons of plastics that cannot be recycled - the emissions equivalent of as many as 1,000 pickups.

Half of the average electric car's parts are made with petrochemicals, to say nothing of the fact that an e-car's battery requires five to 10 times as much mining per mile travelled as the oil for a gas-engine vehicle.

One last fact for May, Blanchet and the other absurdists: Even though consumption of Canadian oil is off by as much as 600,000 barrels a day (a figure that could reach 1 million by the middle of summer) - which sounds like a whopping amount - we are still producing about 3.8 million barrels every day.

Oil will be alive and well for decades. *lgunter@postmedia.com* twitter.com/sunlornegunter !@COPYRIGHT=© 2020 Sun Media Corporation. All rights reserved.

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Mike Hensen, Postmedia Network Files; (See hardcopy for photo);

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Document-Type: News

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: OIL & GAS PRICES (90%); PRICES (90%); EPIDEMICS (88%); EMISSIONS (78%); ENERGY PRICES (78%); POLITICAL & SOCIAL IDEOLOGIES (78%); SUSTAINABILITY (78%); SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (78%); GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (77%); GOVERNMENT BUDGETS (77%); GOVERNMENT CONTROLLERS & AUDITORS (77%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (77%); POLITICAL PARTIES (76%); REGIONAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (76%); ENGINEERING (74%); ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES (69%); COVID CORONAVIRUS (68%); COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS (68%); INFECTIOUS DISEASE (68%); PRICE CUTTING (65%); things,renewable,energy,seldom,produces,takes (%)

Industry: ENERGY & UTILITIES (90%); OIL & GAS PRICES (90%); ALTERNATIVE & RENEWABLE ENERGY (89%); SOLAR ENERGY (89%); ELECTRIC POWER PLANTS (78%); EMISSIONS (78%); ENERGY PRICES (78%); FOSSIL FUELS (78%); MANUFACTURING (78%); OIL & GAS INDUSTRY (78%); SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (78%); BUDGETS (77%); GOVERNMENT BUDGETS (77%); GOVERNMENT CONTROLLERS &

AUDITORS (77%); ENGINEERING (74%); NATURAL GAS & ELECTRIC UTILITIES (73%); BUDGET DEFICITS (72%); PETROCHEMICALS (72%); PRICE CUTTING (65%)

Geographic: OTTAWA, ON, CANADA (89%); ONTARIO, CANADA (74%); QUEBEC, CANADA (73%); CANADA (94%); SAUDI ARABIA (92%)

Load-Date: May 10, 2020

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